

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8 February 2017

Contact person, Patrick Porgans, (916) 833-8734 or 543-0780 for additional information

### **Floods and droughts are raising doubts throughout the soaked drenched Golden State**



Californians are under the weather; inundated by a plethora of mix messages; Governor Jerry Brown's Emergency Drought [Proclamation](#), requiring mandatory water cutbacks in the urban sector, meanwhile, almost every major reservoir in the state is storing and releasing flood waters, with one exception at the State Water Project's Oroville Reservoir and Dam.

As Department of Water Resources' officials began to ramp up floodwater releases at the Project's Oroville

**Figure 1: Oroville Dam Spillway - Source KCRA News** Reservoir into the spillway they discovered a failure in the concrete lining. The damage caused DWR officials to cut back floodwater releases from 30,008 cubic feet per second (CFS) to 5,000 CFS. At that time, inflow into the reservoir was 129,300 CFS; the damaged spillway presents a real and present danger to downstream inhabitants. On 6 February, 2017, [Oroville Reservoir](#) was at 80 percent of capacity and at 120 percent of "normal".

Prior to the failure of the spillway DWR was already storing floodwater in the "Designated Flood Storage Space." Although federal flood control regulations provide for the use of this space, flood storage and releases are determined by other ruling factors; i.e., ground wetness index (soil saturation), antecedent precipitation, inflow and outflow requirements included in the [Oroville Flood Control Diagram](#).

On Monday, Porgans/Associates notified the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) of our concerns that DWR was encroached, and based on this week's weather forecast there would be more storms and rainfall at higher elevations; urging strict compliance with the [Flood Control Regulations](#). It is important to note, that in the event an operator of a section 7 reservoir violates the regulations, there is essentially no enforcement provision, other than the USACE's can write the operator, noting the violation.

In previous weather and storage conditions resulted in significant damage to property and loss of life; DWR failed to operate the Oroville Flood Control space in compliance with USACE's operating criteria. The flooding problem was exacerbated by restricting water releases on the Yuba River from New Bullards Bar [Reservoir](#), a major tributary to the Feather River. The end result is that the floodwater releases exceeded the design channel capacity.

DWR officials conceded in their own reports that it is tempting to store more water in the flood storage space, which would otherwise not be permitted by the regulations. P/A assisted in providing the victims of the 1997 flood resulting from the operation of those reservoirs, and the subsequent levee failure at the confluence of the Yuba and Feather River in successfully winning their lawsuit against DWR.

“The operation of reservoirs for flood protection is not without problems, and occasionally the reservoirs are not operated according to the published rule curve requirements. The use of flood storage space for other purposes served by the reservoir, such as power generation or conservation storage, negates the benefits derived from flood protection. When heavy storm runoff fills the reservoir's flood storage space, it is tempting to release the water slowly through the power turbines rather than to quickly evacuate the space by additional controlled releases which may be called for by standard operating procedures. This practice could defeat the flood protection operation.” [DWR, [Bulletin 199](#), p. 33.]

## **Emergency Drought Regulations Up for Review**

In the midst of the floods, today, the State Water Resources Control Board has scheduled a hearing to consider a proposed Resolution amending and readopting drought-related emergency regulations for urban water conservation, which was required as part of the Governor's Drought Emergency Proclamation.

The Governor's position to extend the emergency drought proclamation, in light of the current flooding, has captured the attention and opposition of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA). According to ACWA, executive officer, Tim Quinn, extending the drought emergency regulations is sending the wrong message and will undermine the public's confidence in water officials' credibility.

The Association of California Water Agencies ([ACWA](#)) is the largest statewide coalition of public water agencies in the country. Its 430 public agency members collectively are responsible for 90% of the water delivered to cities, farms and businesses in California. ACWA plays a major role in water policy and development, promoting \$20 billion in General Obligation Bonds, give-away funds predominately to water districts, repaid by the taxpayers via the General Fund.

It is no surprise that even the “[Mighty Quinn](#)” appears to realize that “blowback” is not out of the forecast; especially when Californians were forced to cutbacks, along with cutbacks of water releases to meet Delta water needs; total amount of water “saved” was 3.2 million acre-feet (acre-foot is enough water to cover an acre of land one-foot in water. That amount of water would fill Folsom Dam three times or Oroville Reservoir nearly to its 3.5 million acre-feet of storage; the estimated value of that water is worth \$3.2 billion.

Although a formal request has been made to the SWRCB officials as to the whereabouts of that water; to date, they have failed to provide that crucial information. P/A's preliminary findings indicate the water is being used to supplement shortages in the SWP and the federal Central Valley Project, for new housing development, and agricultural expansion!

The following links of other drought related articles published by Patrick Porgans, Forensic Account and Regulatory specialist. Porgans has been engaged in water issues in California and the West and has completed more than 75-Fact Finding Reports on water and water-related issues.

<http://www.watereducation.org/aquaforia-news/patrick-porgans-lloyd-g-carter-wolf-cries-howling-aboutdrought-all-wet>  
<http://www.lloydgcarter.com/content/100901425> more-doubts-about-the-drought

<http://patrickporgansblog.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/site/node/8841>